

Week Ending Friday, July 18, 1997

**Remarks to the Citizens of
Bucharest, Romania**

July 11, 1997

The President. Thank you. Mr. President, thank you for your wonderful welcome. And to the young student who just spoke, Semina Munteanu, if she is a representative of the youth of Romania, the future of this nation is in good hands.

I am proud to be the first American President to visit a free Romania——

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. I am proud to stand in University Square, where so many have sacrificed for freedom. Most of all, I am proud to see in this vast crowd the face of a new Romania, moving beyond the past to build a bright future of possibility for all your people. Congratulations.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. America knows that Romania's destiny lies in an undivided, democratic, peaceful Europe, where every nation is free and every free nation is the partner of the United States. To all the people of Romania who love freedom so dearly: I come to Romania because of all you have already done; I come because I know what you still can do; I come because of all that we must do together to achieve your destiny in the family of freedom.

No people—no people have suffered more under Communist repression. No people paid a higher price for the simple right to live in freedom. No people faced greater challenges in the struggle to start anew. But though your path has been steep and hard, you are going forward. And for that, we salute you.

In America—in America, we have seen your spirit, your endurance, your determination symbolized by the feat of one of your young Romanian athletes. At the end of the

New York marathon last fall, a runner named Anuta Catuna came from behind to close the lead and earn her way to victory in one of America's most prized races. Like her, Romania has set its sights and its heart on the long run. And like her, the Romanian people have won the world's respect for moving so far, so fast, and for believing in yourselves and your future. Like her marathon race, the marathon of freedom is not a sprint; it takes steady and persistent commitment to stay the course. After more than 200 years, America now knows the journey of democracy is never over; it must be traveled every single day.

But what progress you have made. You have launched bold economic reforms to give your people the chance to make the most of their own lives. In the short term, I know there are costs to this market reform. But in the long term, the rewards are far greater, in better jobs, new opportunities, more trade and investment from around the world for your people. And in recent years, we have learned from other nations' experience that those who reform the fastest make the most progress for their people. Romania has been making up for lost time, and the whole world is taking notice.

You have turned old grievances to new friendships, within your borders and beyond. You have forged landmark treaties with Hungary and Ukraine. You have brought ethnic Hungarians into democratic government for the first time. You are giving minorities a greater stake in your common future. Together you are doing something that people all over the world must do, you are reaching across the lines that divide you to build one Romania. And for that, I salute you.

You have shown the way of responsible leadership here in your own region. In Bosnia, it was Romanian engineers who repaired the first train crossing the Sava River so that critical aid could reach the Bosnian people after years of deprivation. In Albania, Romania's peacekeeping battalion has played

a key role in promoting stability and securing free elections. Your nation, at its own initiative and its own expense, has helped your faltering neighbors get their feet back on the ground. And for that, the world salutes you. Of course, there is more work to do. I come here to say that America will do that work with you.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. The values that govern Romania today, liberty, openness, tolerance, free markets, these are values shared by the community of democracies Romania is joining. The community includes security cooperation through the Partnership For Peace. It includes strong ties of trade and investment. It includes institutions like the European Union. And of course, it includes NATO.

I welcome Romania's deep desire to contribute even more fully to Europe's security and strength. I welcome your desire to join NATO. I want that, too, for Europe, for America, and for you. And I say to you today: Stay the course, and Romania will cross that milestone.

To all nations who embrace democracy and reform and wish to share the responsibilities of membership, I reaffirm from this plaza of freedom: The door to NATO is open. It will stay open, and we will help you to walk through it.

NATO has committed to review aspiring members in 1999. Romania is one of the strongest candidates. And if you stay the course and manifest the love of liberty we all see here today, there can be no stronger candidate. Stay the course. Stay the course. The future is yours.

Audience members. Clinton! Clinton! Clinton!

The President. Thank you.

In the meantime, your President and I have agreed to establish a strategic partnership between our nations, a partnership important to America because Romania is important to America, important in your own right, important as a model in this difficult part of the world. Romania can show the people of this region and, indeed, people throughout the world that there is a better way than fighting and division and repres-

sion. It is cooperation and freedom and peace.

Mr. President, citizens of Romania, my visit has been brief, but our friendship will endure the test of time. As long as you proceed down democracy's road, America will walk by your side.

The great Romanian-born playwright, Ionesco, once said, "There has always been at every living moment of culture a will to renewal." Here in Bucharest, I see that will to renewal all around. I am reminded of the words of your hymn, once forbidden but never forgotten: "Wake up, Romanian." You have shown the world, and you have shown me here today, that Romania has awakened, awakened to democracy, awakened to freedom, awakened to security, awakened to your destiny. And because of you, the world has awakened to Romania. May the light of your freedom shine forever, and may God bless the Romanian people and the future of our two peoples together.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:25 p.m. in University Square at Piata Universitatii. In his remarks, he referred to Semina Munteanu, a student who introduced the President; and President Emil Constantinescu of Romania. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Exchange With Reporters in Bucharest

July 11, 1997

Museum Visit

Q. What did you buy at the Peasant's Museum?

The President. I bought just a representative sample of the things that were there.

President's Reception

Q. What did you think of the reception?

The President. It was amazing. It was truly amazing. I can't imagine how many people were there; because there were people, when I drove up, in blocks that had been blocked off by the police, who were way back—weren't even visible from the stage. There were a lot of people there.

Q. Were you surprised by the warmth?